



SAFETY CONNECTION

MARCH ISSUE

2007

VISION

Through public and private partnerships, achieve the most improved and sustainable downward trend in highway fatalities and injuries in the nation.

MISSION

To be the vital link in the Commonwealth's chain of transportation safety by elevating the emphasis on highway and traffic safety.

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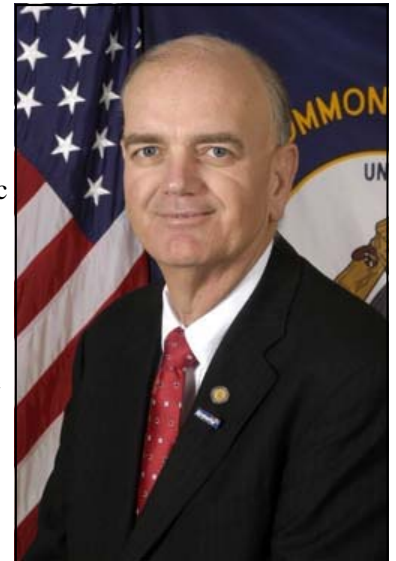
Transportation Operations Center 9

Transportation Secretary Bill Nighbert Named Governor's Representative For Highway Safety In Kentucky

Secretary Bill Nighbert was recently appointed Governor's Representative for Highway Safety in Kentucky. Secretary Nighbert represents the Commonwealth on various boards and task forces related to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. He oversees and administers federal and state highway safety funds, while implementing Kentucky's state highway safety plan.

"It is a great honor to accept the appointment. Governor Ernie Fletcher and the Transportation Cabinet place highway safety at the core of our mission," said Secretary Nighbert.

The Cabinet will work closely with the Kentucky State Police and other law enforcement agencies, partnering together for safer roads across the Commonwealth. The Transportation Cabinet is committed to highway safety, and reducing fatalities and injuries.



Secretary Bill Nighbert

Department of Transportation Safety Heads to the Sweet Sixteen

Drive Smart Program Targets Teen Drivers

As high school basketball fans rally behind their favorite team, the Department of Transportation Safety shares the importance of driving safely. Vehicle crashes are the number one killer of young adults. The Department is participating in the state championship tournament by providing educational materials and airing safety commercials on display boards during the games.

Since most car crashes are attributed to reckless driving, the Drive Smart campaign focuses on teens between the ages of 15 and 21. Teens are encouraged to speak up when they are in the car with friends and do not feel safe. Teens are also reminded to buckle up. Last year, 65 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes were not wearing a seatbelt. One of the deadliest occurrences in any vehicle crash is when occupants get ejected from the vehicle. Kentucky's teen drivers are also involved in 16 percent of total fatal collisions. The tragedy of teen driver crashes goes well beyond the teen driver and their teen passengers. These crashes also kill pedestrians and people in other vehicles. Please share the young driver insert inside with others.

Vehicle Crashes Leading Cause of Death of Teens



Commissioner
Tim Hazlette

511 Delivers – Rain, Sleet or Snow

During the last few weeks the Commonwealth received a mixed assortment of weather conditions. Transportation employees have been monitoring the road conditions around the clock.

Employees from the Divisions of Traffic Assistance and Security, Maintenance and Operations receive critical information regarding road conditions from district personnel. This information is used to create real time travel and traffic information for citizens contacting 511.

During the first two weeks of February, 30,879 visitors contacted our 511 system. On February 6, the service received the highest volume of visitors with 5,027 in one day. The average volume per day during this time frame was 2,206. With this great volume of interest in 511, motorists are getting more prepared for a safer journey.

March madness is upon us. With basketball tournaments held across the Commonwealth and the nation, we are reminded of our carefree youth and the importance of teen safety. One of the most difficult times as a parent is watching your son or daughter drive away for the first time after obtaining their driver's license. We hope they remember to proceed with caution, observe traffic rules, and buckle up. For many teens the price of driving comes at a heavy cost ... their own life.

Nearly half of all teen deaths are attributed to vehicle crashes—more than triple the number of teen suicides and more than double the number of teen homicides. Kentucky made tremendous strides with the passage of the Graduated Driver's License legislation in 2006. The Department of Transportation Safety is working to reduce fatalities and injuries on Kentucky's roads. Encouraging teen drivers to proceed with caution is vital to the overall safety of motorists. Please continue to help us make a difference and share the safety message with young drivers.

Highway Safety Advocates Give Kentucky Their Highest Ranking

Kentucky earns a "green light" and is recognized as a top-performing state by a national highway safety advocacy group. Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety identified Kentucky as one of only 16 green light states and one of only four "Best Performance States" in its fourth annual highway safety report. The ranking is based on the passage of at least two additional highway safety laws in 2006.

"From day one of this administration, a principal focus has been to save lives on Kentucky's roadways," said Transportation Cabinet Secretary Bill Nighbert. "Governor Fletcher championed three critical pieces of highway safety legislation in 2006. We're beginning to see the tangible results of the Governor's leadership, with lower highway fatality numbers. Others around the nation are beginning to take note of Kentucky's highway safety initiatives, too, and we're very grateful for the recognition from Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety."

2006 was a landmark year in Kentucky with the passage of significant legislation including the primary seatbelt law, the quick clearance law to clear crash sites and keep traffic moving, and the graduated driver's license law aimed at reducing the high number of fatal crashes among Kentucky teenagers.

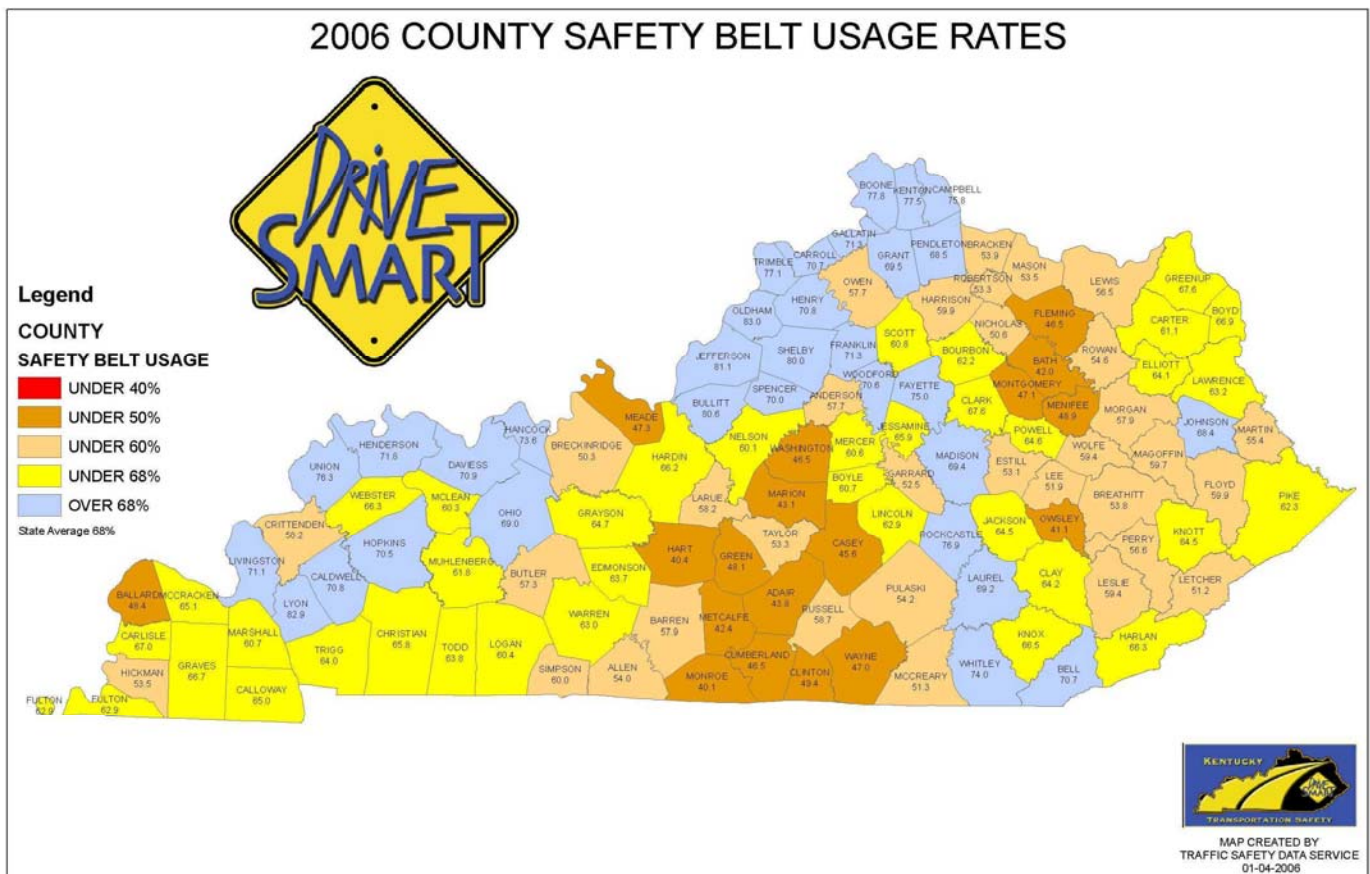
"While there is still much work to do, Kentucky deserves special kudos for passing several important safety laws in 2006," said Advocates President Judie Stone. "Paramount among them is primary enforcement of Kentucky's seatbelt law and the excellent teen driving measures that were adopted. Kentucky now deserves our 'green' rating. Congratulations, Kentucky."

The "green" rating is the highest of three Advocates' ratings based on a state's adoption of optimal safety laws. A "yellow" Advocates rating signals the need for improvement in a particular state. A "red" rating is assigned when a state falls seriously behind in safety-related legislation. Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, based in Washington D.C., is a coalition of insurance, consumer, health, safety and law enforcement organizations that work together to advocate state and national highway and safety policies. The complete "2007 Roadmap to State Highway Safety Laws" report can be found at: www.saferoads.org.

Buckle Up and Drive Smart

Are Folks Buckling Up in Your County?

Please take a few moments to review the chart below. How many people are wearing seatbelts in your county? Highway safety is a shared responsibility. Buckle up and remind others to do the same. If you would like to make a difference in your county, please contact the Division of Traffic Safety Research and Education at (502) 564-1438. The Division offers many *Drive Smart* strategies from a coordinated highway blitz, radar trailers to educational seminars.



Agencies Join Together for US 31 W Operation Drive Smart Corridor Blitz



Pictured: Jeff Moore, District 3 Highway office, reminds everyone that the purpose of the Blitz is to reinforce safer driving behavior.

The US 31 W Operation Drive Smart Corridor Blitz was recently held February 26 - March 4, 2007. Sixteen agencies joined forces for the Blitz in Simpson, Warren, Edmonson, Barren and Hart Counties. The participating agencies included the Kentucky State Police, Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement, Bowling Green Police Department, Warren County Sheriff's Department, Western Kentucky University Police Department, Smith's Grove Police Department, Woodburn Police Department, Park City Police Department, Simpson County Sheriff's Department, the Franklin Police Department, Edmonson County Sheriff's Department, Barren County Sheriff's Department, Cave City Police Department, Horse Cave Police Department, Hart County Sheriff's Office and the Muncieville Police Department.

Officers posted roadblocks from the Kentucky-Tennessee line north through Hart County. The officers checked for drivers' seatbelt use, those driving under the influence, and properly fastened child seats. The Blitz was planned after a study showed the highway has a high rate of injuries and fatalities. The effort also included educational initiatives to inform drivers of speed limits and other safety precautions. The Blitz provides a perfect example of a community coming together to reduce fatalities and injuries in an area. In their first year, the US 31W team had a 14% reduction in fatalities and injuries.

Warren East High and Edmonson County High Schools also participated in this community effort by teaching drivers safety and encouraging teens to buckle up. The schools also posted *Buckle Up* signs. The signs serve as a reminder to students to *Buckle Up and Drive Smart* as they leave the school parking lot each day. Seat belt surveys were conducted at each of the schools. In addition, the surveys will be completed again in three months after safety programs have been conducted at each school.

Warren East High School proudly displays *Buckle Up* Sign. The school continues to monitor and encourage seatbelt use among teens.





Young Drivers

Did you know motor vehicle crashes are the **leading cause of death** of teenagers? Young drivers are twice as likely as adult drivers to be killed in a crash. Many young drivers perceive a driver's license as a ticket to freedom and do not realize driving is a privilege, not a right. It comes with a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe on the roadway.

Five Major Factors Contributing To Young Driver Crashes

The term young drivers usually refers to drivers under the age of 21. Teenage drivers represent only 6% of Kentucky's total driving population. Young drivers are involved in 20% of total collisions, 21% of total injury collisions, and 16% of total fatal collisions.

1. Driver Distraction and Inattention:

- Talking to passengers
- Using a cell phone
- Changing the CD/radio
- Eating and drinking
- Daydreaming

These types of activities led to 28,025 collisions, resulting in 9,829 injuries and **80 fatalities**.*

2. Speeding & Aggressive Driving:

- risk-taking behavior
- ignoring the posted speed limit
- following too close
- weaving in-and-out of traffic

These types of activities led to 4,530 collisions, resulting in 1,856 injuries and **74 fatalities**.*

3. Lack of Driving Experience & Inadequate Driving Skills:

- misjudgment
- driving too fast for road conditions
- not under proper control
- over correcting/oversteering

These types of activities led to 17,355 collisions, resulting in 9,000 injuries and **248 fatalities**.*

4. Impaired Driving:

- drugs
- alcohol
- prescription and non-prescription medication
- fatigue

These types of activities led to 2,323 collisions, resulting in 1,711 injuries and **66 fatalities**.*

5. Low Seatbelt Use:

Seatbelt use is one of the most effective measures to decrease injuries and deaths in a crash; unfortunately, teens are less likely to be buckled up than any other age group. Over 61% of the young drivers killed were not wearing a seatbelt.*

*Statistics (2003 through 2005)

Primary Seatbelt Law

Kentucky has a primary seatbelt law, meaning all drivers AND passengers must be restrained while in the vehicle. A fine of \$25 will be given for each person that is not restrained.

Graduated Driver's License

Recently, enhancements were made to the way new drivers obtain a driver's license. This law, enacted in an effort to reduce teenage driving fatalities and injuries, seeks to control high-risk situations new drivers commonly face and motivate new drivers to drive safely. For more information, visit <http://drlic.kytc.ky.gov/Grad/>.

Distracted Driving

For teenage drivers, the risk of a crash increases with each passenger. Conversations with friends and family cause drivers to take attention off the road. Cell phone use, changing a CD or radio station, eating and drinking, and grooming while driving is also dangerous. Mix these distractions with an inexperienced driver and that is a deadly combination! If under 18, make sure to follow the passenger restrictions under the Graduated Driver's License law.

Underage Drinking

Once a person takes a drink, impairment begins. Alcohol slows reflexes, weakens coordination, blurs eyesight, gives a false sense of being in control and leads to risky decision-making.

All states have ZERO TOLERANCE laws, meaning it is illegal for people under the age of 21 to drive after drinking any amount of alcohol.

Being convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) has serious consequences. It may lead to jail time, losing your license, an increase in insurance, payment of fines and court costs. Most importantly, it could cause serious injury or death.

For more information:

- AAA Exchange: www.aaapublicaffairs.com
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: www.aaafoundation.org
- Drivers.com: www.drivers.com/topic/8/
- Driving Skills for Life: www.drivingskillsforlife.com
- How's My Driving? Teen Safety Program: www.howsmydriving.com/drive4life.nsf
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet practice driver's exam: <http://kentucky.gov/kytc/practicedriversexam/>
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/youngdriverstsfo5.pdf
- National Safety Council: www.nsc.org/library/facts/yngdrive.htm
- National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course: www.nsc.org/train/ddc/student/alive25.cfm
- Smart Drivers Just Drive: www.distracteddriving.org
- Students Against Drunk Driving: www.sadd.org
- TeenDriving.Com: www.teendriving.com



KYTC Announces Highway Hazard Hotline

Operators and Equipment Standing By at **1-800-728-2448**

Temperatures are fluctuating, birds are singing, and Punxsutawney Phil says there's only 3 weeks left until it's springtime in the Commonwealth. Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) highway crews are setting their sights on eliminating highway hazards and the KYTC is asking for the public's help. You can help to inform the cabinet of any highway hazards in your area by calling the **Highway Hazard Hotline at 1-800-728-2448**.

"With our toll-free line, motorists have a direct way to report maintenance concerns or other hazards they see along our state highways," Secretary of Transportation Bill Nighbert said. "Since our state highway crews can't be everywhere at all times, we depend on drivers to inform us of the needs that are out there. This is one way we can all work together to help fulfill Governor Ernie Fletcher's directive to make our roads safer. We greatly appreciate the public's involvement in our Highway Hazard Hotline."

The Highway Hazard Hotline, **1-800-728-2448**, is answered 24 hour a day, seven days a week by Transportation Operations Center personnel. The hotline is available throughout the year for the public to report problems with state maintained highways.

"When we receive a call, we ask for the location of the problem, the name or number of the state highway and either a mile point or landmark," says Commissioner of Highways Marc Williams. "That way our crews can act quickly, respond to the concern, and remedy the situation on the state roadway."

"It's everyone's responsibility to make our roads as safe as possible," continued Tim Hazlette, Commissioner of the KYTC's Department of Transportation Safety. "Our highway hazard hotline is an easy way for people to get involved and help get hazards off our roadways."

The Transportation Cabinet spends \$230 million each year to maintain our state highways. That figure includes activities like snow and ice removal, tree and brush removal, mowing and litter removal, bridge repair, roadway striping, and traffic signal repair among other activities.

"One of the most evident maintenance efforts this time of the year is pothole patching," concluded Chuck Knowles, Executive Director for System Preservation and Operations. "Potholes occur because of the freezing and thawing cycle. Identifying potholes on state roads is just one of the many ways the public can help us eliminate highway hazards by calling our hotline at **1-800-728-2448**."

Need Help? Posters Available to Assist You

The Department of Transportation Safety recently developed posters to assist motorists. The poster featured below, front and back respectively, are available by calling (502) 564-1438.

**NEED
HELP!**

If you are involved in a crash:

- ▶ If no one is visibly injured, move vehicle to the shoulder or off the interstate or parkway (KRS 189.580)
- ▶ Call police
- ▶ Exchange information

If you have a disabled vehicle:

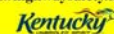
- ▶ Move vehicle off the roadway if possible and stay in the vehicle
- ▶ Turn on emergency flashers
- ▶ Place this sign in the rear window and raise hood to request aid
- ▶ If unable to move the vehicle from the roadway, stand away from the vehicle

For roadway emergencies, call
1-800-728-2448



For police assistance, call
1-888-222-5555

Kentucky Department of Transportation Safety
<http://highwaysafety.ky.gov>



Traffic Congestion, Gridlock ... Relief is on the Way!

Inter-Agency Task Force Formalizes Agreement for “Quick Clearance” Procedures in Kentucky

Kentucky highway safety professionals recently met in Frankfort to formalize a pact aimed at reducing delays on the Commonwealth’s interstates and parkways during highway incidents. Improving the safety of motorists and first responders is a key component of the plan.

The agreement makes official the formation of the Incident Management Task Force (IMTF). The group will work to implement the following goals, as outlined in Kentucky Highway Incident Management Strategic Plan:

- Improve safety for first responders, highway workers, and motorists
- Reduce traffic delays
- Improve motorists’ awareness of highway incidents
- Improve responder and highway worker preparedness

The Incident Management Task Force will function under the authority of the Governor’s Executive Committee on Highway Safety. “Governor Fletcher is concerned about highway safety. The mission of this task force makes saving lives on Kentucky’s roadways its number one goal,” said Bill Nighbert, Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC). “We are also acutely aware of the negative economic impact that long delays can cause. With these important considerations in mind, this administration wants Kentucky to develop the standards for the rest of the nation to follow for effective highways incident management.”

Tim Hazlette, Commissioner of the KYTC Department of Transportation Safety, is both a member of the IMTF and chair of the Governor’s Executive Committee on Highway Safety. “Attitudes and established beliefs have played an enormous role in the way the public has always responded to highway incidents,” Commissioner Hazlette observed. “When a lot of us learned to drive, we were taught not to move our vehicle after a collision. We were instructed to wait until police arrived. We now know that, because of the secondary

crash factor, moving vehicles that have been involved in a collision can save lives, not to mention helping clear up congestion. This is the message we intend to get out to the public: ‘If there are no injuries involved, the right thing to do is move your vehicle to the side of the road.’”

Improving the performance of first responders is also a major goal of the IMTF. Deputy State Highway Engineer Chuck Knowles chairs the Incident Management Task Force. “Saving lives and property will always be at the top of any first responder’s priority list,” Knowles said. “We also want to move traffic flow way up to the top of that list.” With that goal in mind, the Task Force will use a number of performance measures to gauge progress on “Quick Clearance.” The Task Force also plans to offer workshops for first responders.

Kentucky State Police Commissioner Jack Adams praised the formation and work of the IMTF. “Kentucky’s plan to provide multi-agency, coordinated responses to highway incidents will result in increased safety for first responders and victims of an incident, as well as for other motorists traveling through the incident area. The Kentucky State Police is pleased to join with all Task Force members in working toward this goal.”

Another participant on the IMTF is the Towing and Recovery Association of Kentucky. “This is a great example of government agencies and the private sector coming together to achieve some very important goals,” said Association President Scott Burrows. “We’re very proud to be a signatory to this landmark agreement, which will improve safety for motorists and first responders, and will reduce costly travel delays in Kentucky.”

The Task Force has been meeting and formulating action plans since March 2006. The KYTC originally funded a study by the Kentucky Transportation Center to develop a strategic plan for highway incident management. The Transportation Center continues to serve the Task Force in an organization and support role.

Transportation Operations Center Works With Local Agencies To Keep Traffic Moving and Public Aware Through 511 Service

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Sets Example

The Division of Traffic Assistance and Security has taken on the challenge to better assist the public in developing more precise travel and traffic information. The Transportation Operation Center is equipped 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with personnel adding up-to-date information to 511. However, we realize we are not receiving information from enough agencies throughout the Commonwealth to have complete and accurate coverage.

Director Mark Stapleton recently set out to meet with several county judges and other county/city agencies to take the opportunity to discuss the vital role 511 plays in personal lives and commercial businesses in their areas. As Mark stated, "With all agencies cooperating with one another, we can keep the traffic information flowing and the public better informed." This type of cooperation and information gathering is vital to our continued success. In turn all the citizens traveling within the Commonwealth will benefit from our services. In today's fast pace life style, by providing updated traffic information, not only may we save the public time in their hectic schedules, we may even prevent injuries and/or deaths near traffic incident sites on our highways.

One such agency which Director Stapleton discussed the benefits is Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government. By the next day, our TOC was receiving real time information concerning traffic accidents, lane closures and congestion in the Lexington area. With this type of cooperation between local and state agencies, the Transportation Operation Center was able to provide the LFUCG Traffic Information Center with regional reports of traffic incidents in surrounding counties, which could affect traffic flow in the Lexington area. With this type of regional information sharing, it allows the LFUCG to disseminate more traffic information to their constituents. If other city and county agencies cooperate as quickly as LFUCG, we will be able to assist travelers with informed decisions on designation changes and possibly keep them out of harm's way.



Service With A Smile – SAFE Patrol Continues to Receive Praise

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Secretary,

I am sending this email to inform you that Chester Tipton of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Division of Traffic Operations came to my aid when I ran out of gas on the Interstate in Frankfort on January 25.

His timeliness and large heart helped me continue on my path to Chicago, where I have moved from Georgia.

I have as much common sense as a basketball. I walked approximately a half-mile to the BP station, bought a gas container and filled it. Later, at my car, I did not know how to get the gas from the container into my car. Fortunately, that is when Mr. Tipton arrived. He fueled up my car with enough gas to get me back to the gas station, where I promptly topped off my tank.

I am forever grateful to Mr. Tipton and the Commonwealth of Kentucky for this kind deed.

Thank you,

Jim Currier



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Permit #1

Lexington, Ky.

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Department of Transportation Safety
200 Mero Street, 4th Floor
Frankfort, Kentucky 40622

Phone: (502) 564-1438
(888) 374-8768
Log on: highwaysafety.ky.gov

April 2007 Events

Work Zone Safety Month—Signs of Change

Kentucky Lifesavers Conference, April 23-25, Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Ky.

The St. Francis of Assisi School Tours TOC

On January 31, 2006, the sixth grade class of the St. Francis of Assisi School, Pikeville, traveled to Frankfort to tour the Transportation Operations Center (TOC). The class, joined by their parents and teachers, toured the TOC media room. Mrs. Bishop, the 6th grade class teacher, was very complimentary of the tour. She said, "The representatives from the Cabinet were very informative and provided the kids a glimpse into the daily activities performed by the Transportation Operation Center."

The Transportation Operations Center personnel gave an overview of their responsibility to receive, evaluate and dispatch information related to Kentucky weather advisories, traffic delays, and other travel information. They also discussed services provided, such as the 511 traveler advisory telephone service, and the Safety Assistance for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) Patrol. Other topics the children found of interest were the interactive maps, closed circuit television cameras, dynamic message signs, roadway sensors and Information Technology Service capabilities. The parents were very interested in the SAFE patrol program and the amber alert capabilities.



Both parents and teachers were very impressed with the TOC and said it was the highlight of the trip! One parent commented she was very surprised at how advanced Kentucky seemed to be in this field, and was proud that the state was one of the leaders in this area. The teacher, Mrs. Bishop said, "I am glad the children were able to see opportunities for careers and the wide spectrum of jobs the Cabinet has to offer. It also gave an educational perspective highlighting the importance of computer and communications technologies." Sr. Kathleen, St. Francis's principal, also wanted to relay her appreciation for allowing the school to tour the TOC.